

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12, 14-38 are pending and stand ready for further action on the merits. Claims 11 and 13 have been cancelled. Claims 2, 4, 16, 17 and 19-22 have been withdrawn from consideration.

The Title of the invention and the abstract have been amended for clarity.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the subject matter of cancelled claims 11 and 13 and Figures 1 and 2.

Claims 3, 14, 15 and 17 have been amended for clarity.

Claim 30 finds support in the specification at page 5, line 28 et. seq.

Claims 31-38 find support in claims 15 and 23-29, respectively.

No new matter has been added by way of the above-amendment.

Interview

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has conducted a personal interview with Applicants' representative. The Examiner was very helpful in clarifying the outstanding issues.

The following sections correspond to the sections of the outstanding Office Action.

Specification

The Examiner objects to the Abstract of the Disclosure. Specifically, the Examiner objects to the term "means" as appearing in the Abstract.

In response, Applicants have amended the Abstract by deleting the term "means".

The Examiner objects to the title for not being descriptive. In response, Applicants have replaced the title with the following: "Image-Capturing Apparatus Having Multiple Image Capturing Units."

As such, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully submitted.

Prior Art Based Rejections

The following rejections are pending:

1. Claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 13, 15 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Suemoto et al. (U.S. 6,151,067);
2. Claims 1, 5, 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kaneko (U.S. 4,920,371);
3. Claims 1, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Masayoshi (U.S. 5,990,937);
4. Claims 1 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by McClellan et al. (U.S. 5,329,325);

5. Claims 1, 6, 11-12 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Vockenhuber (U.S. 4,148,072)<sup>1</sup>;
6. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Fukuoka (U.S. 5,754,227);
7. Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Ishikawa et al. (U.S. 6,549,650);
8. Claims 24, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Vockenhuber '072 in view of Ishikawa et al. (U.S. 6,549,650); and
9. Claims 27, 28 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Suemoto '067 in view of Fellegara et al. (U.S. 6,441,854).

Applicants respectfully traverse each of the rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references teach or fairly suggest the present invention as described in claim 1, as originally filed. However, in order to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite the subject matter of claim 11. Accordingly, rejections numbered as 1-3 and 6-9 above, are rendered moot.

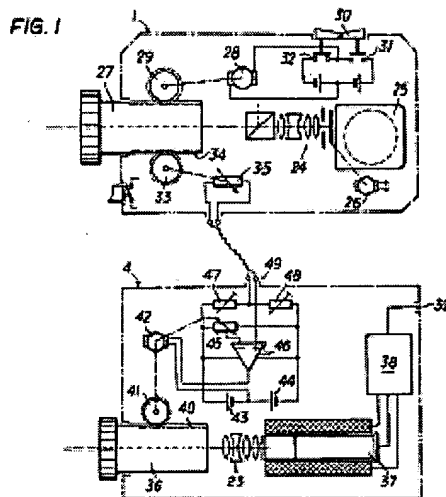
The following comments relate to the patentable distinctions between the present invention and the teachings of McClellan '325 and Vockenhuber '072. These references were included in rejections numbered as 4 and 5 above.

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<sup>1</sup> It appears from the Examiner's comments that the Examiner gave the wrong patent number for Vockenhuber. The correct patent number is 4,148,072.

Based on the above-amendment, the image capturing apparatus includes: a) a first connecting part that mechanically and directly connects a second connecting part of the second image-connecting part so as to form a single unit; and b) an interface for transmitting data between the first image capturing unit and the second image capturing unit.

Vockenhuber '072 teaches the following apparatus in Figure 1:



During the Interview, the Examiner took the position that the wire connecting element 1 with element 4 is encompassed by the following phrase of claim 13, as originally filed:

a connecting part to which the second image-capturing unit is connected.

Applicants respectfully submit that presently amended claim 1 is distinct from Vockenhuber '072, since presently amended claim 1 recites:

a first connecting part that mechanically and directly connects a second connecting part of the second image-capturing unit so as to form a single unit.

Clearly, the wire connecting element 1 with element 4 of Vockenhuber '072 is not encompassed by this phrase.

In describing the requirements for rejection of a claim by anticipation, the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (Section 2131) states:

[a] claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference (ref. omitted). The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the... claim (ref. omitted).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully indicate, every element in a claim must be found in the reference in order that the reference anticipates the claim. Since Vockenhuber '072 fails to teach or fairly suggest a first connecting part that mechanically and directly connects a second connecting part of the second image-capturing unit so as to form a single unit, the reference does not anticipate the claims, and as such, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection numbered as "5" above, be withdrawn.

McClellan '325 teach a synchronized zoom electronic camera system as follows in Figure 1:

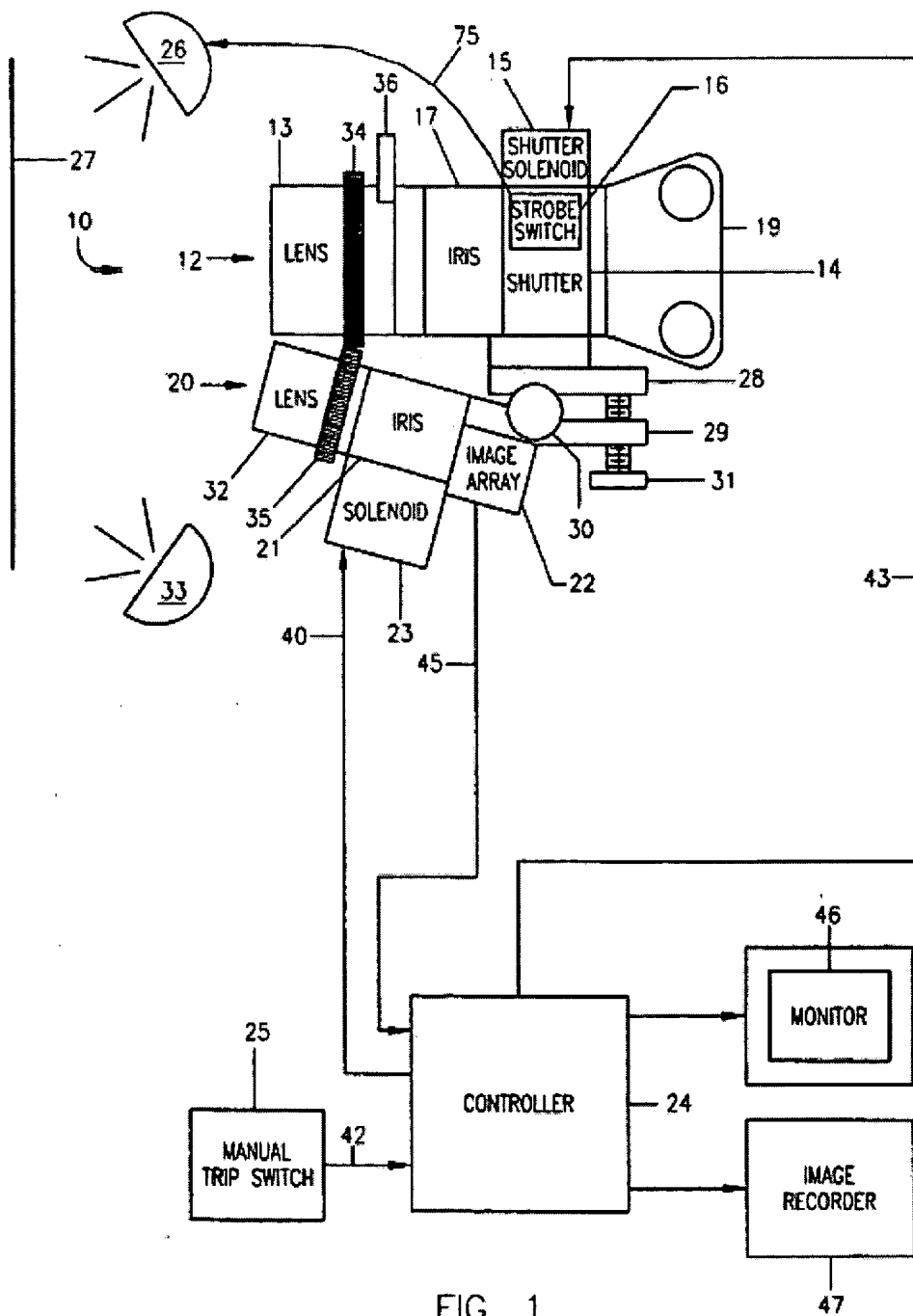


FIG. 1

It is clear from Figure 1 of McClellan '325, that the device of McClellan '325 does not include an interface for transmitting data between the first-image capturing unit and the second image-capturing unit, as presently claimed. The controller 24 of McClellan '325 receives data from each device and converts the data into a set of instructions to be sent to each image capturing unit to control the camera features. However, this set of instructions is not equivalent to the raw data being sent through the interface of the inventive image capturing units.

Since McClellan '325 fails to teach or fairly suggest an interface for transmitting data between the first-image capturing unit and the second image-capturing unit, the reference does not anticipate the claims, and as such, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection numbered as "4" above, be withdrawn.

#### Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and comments, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. A notice to such effect is earnestly solicited.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$950.00 is attached hereto.




Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Garth M. Dahlen, Ph.D., Esq. (Reg. No. 43,575) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Abstract of the Disclosure

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An image-capturing apparatus is capable of capturing a three-dimensional image and a high quality panoramic image as the need arises, and is portable if it is used as a single lens camera that captures a normal two-dimensional image. A second image-capturing unit having an image-capturing optical system is detachably connected to a first image-capturing unit, which is capable of functioning as an image-capturing apparatus by itself, through joints and a connector. The second image-capturing unit can extensively connect to other units, which have the similar connecting structure. Information is transmitted between the units through a slot for an external storage device. The positions of images captured by the second and subsequent image-capturing units can be adjusted with respect to an image captured by the first image-capturing unit. In synchronism with release signals from the first image-capturing unit, the other units are driven to capture the images at the same time or continuously.